

Carpathian ESD at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference

Sustainable Infrastructure, Sustainable Tourism, Education for Sustainable Development

5-7 of October 2022
Nicosia-Cyprus

Report



01.11.2022

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I. Background

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) is a sub-regional treaty, which acts as a mechanism and tool for mainstreaming international environmental and sustainable development policies among its Contracting Parties: Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine. The Convention has a highlighted area of action on learning for sustainability in its Article 13, including education for sustainable development, awareness-raising for and sharing knowledge on and about sustainability in the region.

The Carpathian Convention has initiated development of an Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Expert Network, which is in the process of being formed. The Carpathian ESD Expert Network was initiated at the First Carpathian Seminar on Education for Sustainable Development in Budapest in 2019, under Hungarian presidency. Poland as the next presidency continued these efforts, including the call for nominations of governmental ESD Experts to the Networks by the Convention parties. The next presidency of the Carpathian Convention will be Serbia.

In June 2021, an ESD-related Session and Workshop were held at the Conference of the Science for the Carpathians Network (S4C), Forum Carpaticum, which produced scientific and policy-related recommendations on integrating ESD into the Carpathian Convention.

In October 2021, the Carpathian Convention instigated research on the operation of the Convention-related networks, which resulted in expert recommendations – these are considered when establishing the Education for Sustainable Development Network of the Carpathian Convention.

In September 28-30, 2022, the Convention Secretariat, in collaboration with the Polish Presidency, co-organized the Second Carpathian ESD Seminar, held in Zakopane, Poland. The Seminar brought together educators, researchers and practitioners in the field of ESD from all seven Carpathian countries, in order to identify joint priority actions for ESD in the region.

The Carpathian Convention ESD Network is one of the only two active regional ESD networks in the UNECE regions at present. In order to highlight this achievement of the Convention Parties, the Secretariat, in close collaboration with the government of Hungary, with facilitation by the nominated ESD Expert from the Ministry of Interior of Hungary, and support of the Polish Presidency, proposed the Side Event “ESD Expert Network in the Carpathian Region”, that was held at the 9th Environment for Europe Conference.

These activities are supported via the project “Carpathian ESD: Strengthening the ESD network in the Carpathian Convention via science-policy-practice interface”, funded by the German Federal Environment Ministry’s Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP) for environmental protection in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia and other countries neighbouring the European Union. It is supervised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and by the German Environment Agency.

II. Main Carpathian ESD activities at the Ninth Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference:

1. Side event: “ESD Expert Network in the Carpathian Region” (5 October, 13:10-14:50)

- **Chairperson:** Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary
- **Facilitator:** Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, ESD Expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
- **Rapporteur:** Ms. Mónika Réti, policy officer, Ministry of Interior of Hungary
- **Speakers:** Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary, Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, ESD Expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Mr. Łukasz Rejt, Director of the Department of Nature Conservation, Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland, Ms. Ivana Hadži Stošić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Protection of Environment of the Republic of Serbia, Dr. Joanna Zawiejska, Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland; Chair of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Science for the Carpathians

2. High-level interventions

(Three interventions were planned on October 5 and 6. Two were implemented and one cancelled due to Conference running late)

- Facilitator: Ms. Mónika Réti
- Speakers: Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, Dr. Joanna Zawiejska

3. Note about the Carpathian ESD Expert Network at the side event: “Creating resilience through the power of education for sustainable development” (7 October, 13:45 – 15:30)

- Speaker: Ms. Mónika Réti

1. Side event: ESD Expert Network in the Carpathian Region

Introduction: The side event aimed at introducing how and why the Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Expert Network of the Carpathian Convention was initiated, as well as at highlighting the role of the Carpathian Convention in mainstreaming ESD in the region and fostering action in learning for sustainability in a regional context. The Convention initiated research on the operation of the Convention-related networks, which resulted in expert recommendations, which are considered when establishing the ESD Network. This way, the Convention is unique to have a research-based approach on networking for ESD. Governmental representatives of Hungary, Poland and Serbia - consecutive presidents to the Convention highlighted their past, current and envisioned future efforts in setting up the Carpathian ESD network, followed by inputs from the Chair of the Science for the Carpathians network on linking science-policy and practice.



Chairperson: Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary

Facilitator: Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, ESD Expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

Rapporteur: Ms. Mónika Réti, policy officer, Ministry of Interior of Hungary

Speakers: Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary, Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, ESD Expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, Mr. Łukasz Rejt, Director of the Department of Nature Conservation, Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland, Ms. Ivana Hadži Stošić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Protection of Environment of the Republic of Serbia, Dr. Joanna Zawiejska, Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland; Chair of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Science for the Carpathians.

Agenda

Time	<i>Title of presentation</i> Name, Affiliation
13:10-13:15	<i>Welcome message from the Chair</i> Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary
13:15-13:30	<i>Introduction on ESD in the context of the Carpathian Convention and the purpose of establishing an ESD Expert Network in the Carpathians</i> Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, ESD expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
13:30-13:45	<i>Hungary's role in initiating the ESD Network in the Carpathians</i> Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary
13:45-14:00	<i>Poland's role in establishing the ESD Network in the Carpathians</i> Video Message from Mr. Łukasz Rejt, Director of the Department of Nature Conservation, Ministry of Climate and Environment of Poland
14:00-14:15	<i>Serbia's role in taking further the work of the ESD Network in the Carpathians</i> Ms Ivana Hadži Stošić, State Secretary at the Ministry of Protection of Environment of the Republic of Serbia
14:15 – 14:20	<i>Science -Policy-Practice interface for Carpathian ESD</i> Dr. Joanna Zawiejska, Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland; Chair of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Science for the Carpathians
14:15-14:45	<i>Opening the floor for participants – facilitated discussion on the role of the ESD Network in the Carpathians</i> Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, ESD expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention
14:45-14:50	<i>Concluding remarks from the Chair</i> Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa, State Secretary for Public Education of Hungary

Notes from the Rapporteur

Introductory message by Dr. Zoltán Maruzsa State Secretary on the structure of the side event and emphasizing the relevance of regional thinking and the regional actions in making intentions towards sustainability apparent and tangible, highlighting that the regional collaboration in the Carpathian Convention is a tool, a mechanism and a platform to work towards SDGs and towards ESD implementation not only in this region but contribute to ESD implementation in the UNECE region.

Tamara Mitrofanenko highlights the relevance of the Convention and the place of ESD within the Convention highlighting that Article 13 is an overarching one, connecting other areas of work and supporting their implementation within the region. Dr Mitrofanenko elaborated on the role and structure of Convention presidencies and how participatory co-creation happens within the Convention and in the practice of the work of the conference. The ESD initiative came from Hungary, but the ESD network was formed as a bottom-up process.

Poland highlighted how Poland is building on Hungarian initiatives. Introduced the work completed in Zakopane on 28-30 September 2022 for building regional ESD communities,

highlighting work in national parks, ESD in nature and outdoor education and also in informal settings. As a result of seminar, new initiatives emerged: joint research on ESD context in the region and research related to mapping ESD activities in Carpathian region.

Ms. Ivana Hadži Stošić State Secretary from Serbia introduced ESD initiatives and perspectives, and how local and regional aspects could be harmonised. The State Secretary highlighted the relevance of competence-based approach. Expressed that they wish to continue the work started by Hungary then undertaken by Poland to develop further. Serbia initiated new school pilot projects in ESD topics such as nature protection, waste management, noise, climate change, which were successful, and which will also be implemented in all elementary schools in the future – the initiative was coordinated by the Ministry of Environment of Serbia.

Dr. Joanna Zawiejska highlighted the relevance of research focused on climate change, research on coordination across the region (as environmental issues are transnational by nature). She highlighted the relevance of collaboration with the Secretariat of Carpathian Convention. She introduced the Forum Carpathicum and how it collaborates with Forum Alpinum and Caucasus Network too. Messages to the Convention: Carpathian countries are underrepresented, teachers need to be empowered, local stakeholder involvement is crucial, an inventory and database is needed on ESD topics in the region. She reflected on the Carpathian ESD Seminar outcomes too.

Ms. Lucia Thumová from the Ministry of Environment of Slovakia expressed their support for the Carpathian Convention. It highlighted the steps taken in Slovakia to support ESD, including a special collaboration with nature protection and articulated the willingness of collaboration realizing the joint idea of the future Carpathian Day.

Ms. Alexandra Mladenovic from the Serbian Eco-School Network expressed the relevance of international eco-school approach as a tool in Serbia. She mentioned Sustainable Development as an optional subject in secondary schools in Serbia. She expressed that the structure in the Carpathians supports ideas and future works and calls for more coordination – maybe from the Secretariat and UNEP to lead the process. “We have a force, we need direction to go forward”, she stated.

Dr. Mitrofanenko expressed that the Secretariat intends to support and is looking forward to work with Serbia in their next presidency period.

Question and comment from the audience: the comment referred to the relevance of regional collaboration as environmental issues are cross- and transnational, and the question enquired how to find information and who can take part in the work of the Carpathian Convention.

In her reply, Dr. Mitrofanenko highlighted that working groups are open to observers and contributors and information is at the website, but communication could be improved.

Dr. Zawiejska emphasized that youth who are active are welcome to join the ESD Network as well as the Convention working groups. She also accentuated that monitoring and research on the effectiveness and efficiency of ESD projects and initiatives are needed to justify the spendings on and the benefits of ESD.

Dr. Maruzsa pointed out the relevance of modern pedagogies and refreshing didactics for ESD and bringing them to school life.

In final words, Dr. Maruzsa pointed out the relevance of regional collaboration.

2. High-Level Interventions

Event: Third High-Level Meeting of Education and Environment Ministries on Education for Sustainable Development, 5 October 2022

Intervention by: Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, Senior ESD Expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

Programme element: 17:15–17:45 Entrepreneurship, Employment, Innovation and ESD. Panel followed by discussion

Leading question: Which needs and opportunities can education oriented to sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship be provided to accelerate transformation towards more sustainable economies (green jobs, circular economy, and bioeconomy)?

**this intervention was cancelled shortly before the planned time by the moderator due to the late timing of the conference.*

Intervention Text:

Your Excellencies, dear distinguished colleagues,

Carpathian Convention as a regional treaty on nature protection and sustainable development, adopted at the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Kyiv in 2003, signed and ratified by 7 countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine. The Convention is establishing a Carpathian ESD Expert Network, in close collaboration with the governments of Hungary and Poland, which we hope will contribute to the implementation of the UNECE strategy in the Carpathian region, by integrating work on sustainable development under the Convention with educational initiatives and networks. Through this process, a number of messages and recommendations have been provided by Carpathian experts, related to the question “Which needs and opportunities can education oriented to sustainable innovation and entrepreneurship be provided to accelerate transformation towards more sustainable economies”, and I would like to bring some of them to your attention.

Messages from Carpathian ESD experts and Science for Carpathians Network:

- Consider socio-ecological and socio-cultural specificity of the Carpathian region – and generally, of rural mountainous areas, which face specific obstacles on the way towards sustainability transformations.
- Question relevant for innovation & entrepreneurship: How to gain external new knowledge without losing traditional competences and cultural heritage? How to find a balance between entrepreneurship and preservation of biological and landscape diversity? How to highlight and enhance the role of education and learning processes, considering the specific features and needs of mountainous regions.
- Needs: Transfer and amplification of best practices relevant for mountain regions ; Research and analysis; Capacity for consistent, continuous long-term engagement of actors in these activities and their monitoring and evaluation.
- Specifically Higher educational institutions in Carpathian countries can and should play a stronger role in this respect. However, they need support to access funding at the national, regional and European level to engage in these processes. Even more importantly, what is needed is a system rewarding participation of scientists and

educators, including young scientists, in such activities, bridging research, teaching, policy and practice.

- Core need: Local educational institutions located in rural mountain regions, need support with modernization of tools and equipment, trainings for teachers and researchers as well as materials in national languages
- Last but not least: We know of successful approaches implemented in the Carpathian region using Education as a tool to support local entrepreneurship, Employment & Innovation. However, it is not always clear to our partners that they are engaged in ESD, which highlights the need for dialogue, better communication and coordination among environmental and educational sectors.

On behalf of the Carpathian Convention secretariat, including via the ESD expert network, to express readiness to collaborations with the UNECE steering committee and our parties and interested partners to address these needs.

I would like to extend gratitude to the German Federal Environment Ministry's For helping us highlight ESD in the Carpathian region via its Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP), supervised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and by the German Environment Agency.

Event: High-Level Meeting of Ministers for Education on Education for Sustainable Development, 6 October 2022

Intervention by: Dr. Tamara Mitrofanenko, Senior ESD Expert, Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention

Programme element: 10:10–11:20 Countries' interventions on the implementation of the UNECE Strategy for ESD

Leading question: How can the UNECE Strategy for ESD be used in your country for improving education by creating resilient, healthy, creative, and **“open” learning environments** in your national context?

Intervention Text:

Your Excellencies, dear distinguished colleagues,

The Framework Convention on the Protection and Sustainable Development of the Carpathians (Carpathian Convention) as a regional treaty on nature protection and sustainable development of the Carpathian mountain Region. The Convention was adopted at the Environment for Europe Ministerial Conference in Kyiv in 2003, signed and ratified by 7 countries: Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovak Republic, Ukraine

The Convention is establishing a Carpathian ESD Expert Network, in close collaboration with the government of Hungary (previous presidency of the Convention) and Poland (the current Convention presidency), as well as with support from all Convention Parties. We are looking forward to collaboration with the Government of Serbia, which will take over the presidency next year.

We hope that the Carpathian ESD Expert Network will contribute to the implementation of the UNECE strategy for ESD in the Carpathian region, by integrating work on sustainable development under the Convention, including the knowledge and materials on the Carpathian environment and sustainable development, produced by the Convention Secretariat, Parties and partners, with educational initiatives and networks.

In fact, we have suggested to our Parties to nominate governmental experts from the Ministries of Education, engaged in the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD to the Carpathian ESD Expert network, in order to facilitate collaboration between the experts from the Ministries of Education and the Ministries of Environment, where the Convention Focal Points are located.

I am happy to inform you that we have already received nominations of experts from the Ministries of Education of Romania, Poland and Hungary to the Carpathian ESD Expert Network.

The UNECE Strategy for ESD was helpful in highlighting ESD as a priority topic. Many of our parties and partners, rather experts in different fields of sustainable development, such as biodiversity protection, sustainable tourism development sustainable forestry, etc. engage in ESD-related activities without realizing that.

In fact, activities of the Convention, focused on co-creation of knowledge among stakeholders from various sectors from the 7 Carpathian countries, constitute “open learning environments” – but we need to highlight and enhance the role of education and learning in these processes – and for this we invite collaboration with the Ministries of Education of Carpathian countries, who are experts in this field.

I also take this chance to highlight the important contribution of Higher Educational Institutions in this respect – and call for support of the distinguished delegates here for rewarding participation of scientists and educators, including young scientists, in activities, bridging research, teaching, policy and practice contributing to implementation of UNCECE strategy on ESD, as well as monitoring and evaluation of these activities.

Last year we facilitated the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Scientific Network For The Caucasus Mountain Regions and the Science for the Carpathians Network - and we call on your support to facilitate collaboration between these two mountain regions on research addressing to implementation of UNCECE strategy on ESD.

On behalf of the Carpathian Convention Secretariat, we thank the organizers and the UNECE Steering Committee on ESD for cooperation and we are looking forward to further collaboration with you and all interested partners in the Carpathian region.

I would like to extend gratitude to the German Federal Environment Ministry's For helping us highlight ESD in the Carpathian region via its Advisory Assistance Programme (AAP), supervised by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation and by the German Environment Agency.

Event: High-Level Meeting of Ministers for Education on Education for Sustainable Development, 6 October 2022

Intervention by: Dr. Joanna Zawiejska, Pedagogical University of Kraków, Poland; Chair of the Scientific Steering Committee of the Science for the Carpathians

Programme element: 13:10–13:40 Plenary discussion about UNECE Steering Committee on Education for Sustainable Development as a mechanism of collaboration on ESD in and across countries

Leading questions: How could the UNECE ESD process be improved or transformed for boosting capacity building and networking on ESD in and among countries, organisations, and other processes or mechanisms? and How can regional collaboration on ESD be strengthened or promoted in the UNECE region?

Intervention Text:

Science for the Carpathians (S4C) is a multidisciplinary network of scientists from several disciplines working in the Carpathian Mountains of Central and Eastern Europe. S4C works closely with the Secretariat of the Carpathian Convention, providing scientific recommendations to the Carpathian Convention Working Groups.

Mountains are the epicentre of biodiversity and play a major role in the provision of ecosystem services but also generate hazards and risk that extend beyond the mountains. Mountain regions and mountain communities are particularly vulnerable, especially in the face of ongoing environmental changes driven by human impacts and climate change; the ensuing challenges can be expected to increase in the future.

Hazards and risks related to the dynamic mountain environment respect natural landscape context rather than administrative divisions; environmental problems are thus unlikely to be constrained by state borders and may threaten already impoverished, marginalized or isolated mountain communities. Therefore, regional collaboration regarding ESD is critical for adaptation.

Suggestions on regional collaboration in the context of formal education:

1. *‘Teach how environment works’ approach:* there is a need to support a solid, basic environmental /geosciences education and arrive at an ‘environmental intelligence’ to counteract growing science scepticism and foster adaptation and resilience of mountain communities.
2. Support existing curricula that include ESD – for example emphasize the role of modern geography education that combines environmental context with socioeconomic development.
3. Collaborate to arrive at a common, transboundary vision of SD and ESD in mountain regions viewed as complex socio-ecological systems.
4. Collaborate and coordinate curricula across regions so that the ESD messages they convey are consistent across disciplines and importantly, throughout the three education cycles. This is to equip the new generations with skills to adapt to their fast changing environment.
5. Finally, develop tools to monitor the efficacy of ESD, especially with increased spending.

3. Note about the Carpathian ESD Expert Network at the side event: “Creating resilience through the power of education for sustainable development” (7 October, 13:45 – 15:30)

Introduction: This side event showcased the central role of ESD in building resilience in society. It highlighted the enormous potential of ESD as a lever for the entire sustainable development agenda. The event brought together government officials, experts from UN, academia, civil society, youth, and teachers to discuss these challenges, and share policy recommendations on how ESD can be fully utilized for the transformation needed to respond to current and future challenges.



Ms. Mónika Réti, policy officer, Ministry of Interior of Hungary was one of the panellists at the side event.

Ms. Réti presented experiences and best practices of Hungary, and mentioned the Carpathian ESD Expert Network among them.